Hamilton County, Ohio: Achieving Space, Safety, Environmental Goals

Hamilton County, Ohio—which encompasses the City of Cincinnati as well as 37 other municipalities—is one of the more progressive county governments in the United States in its use of technology to deal with a range of challenges. Those challenges range from the unexceptional (making strained budgets go farther) to the unwelcome but inevitable (responding to health and safety emergencies).

The County Facilities department, headed by Director of County Facilities Ralph Linne, is responsible for approximately 275 buildings, including many high-traffic areas such as the county courthouse (a regional BOMA winner of Government Building of the Year) in downtown Cincinnati.

"It was our job to convince the Board of County Commissioners to spend money on a more comprehensive real estate, infrastructure, and facilities management system that would help us support our mission," says Linne, who was already using ARCHIBUS Space Management when the decision was made to add additional applications. "ARCHIBUS offered the most flexibility for our needs, easy customization, and worked with our existing CAD drawings." The County is now able to forecast space needs, easily identify vacancies, and establish building design standards. Using the various ARCHIBUS applications, we can show our elected officials where people are working, budget for energy/plumbing/cleaning, and perform our capital and strategic master planning."

With ARCHIBUS Real Property & Lease Management, County Facilities can, for example, track lease information such as the length of its leases, and the approximate market value of its owned buildings. "If we downsize, we want to be able to lease out space in any buildings that aren't immediately sold," says Linne. "How we charge for that space will be very important to track."

"So ARCHIBUS is saving money for us in many ways, by more accurately tracking our assets as well as their condition and costs, identifying surplus space, improving management of our fleet of vehicles, and aiding safety and business continuity by responding to emergencies more effectively."

Managing Health and Safety Emergencies

As a part of the County's Risk Management committee, County Facilities also uses the ARCHIBUS Emergency Preparedness application to document fire and life safety procedures on existing AutoCAD floor plans. Egress routes, safe areas, and the location of emergency equipment can all be identified and instantly updated every time there's a change to a room to ensure that this critical information is up-to-date. Drawings are

Vital Statistics

Organization:
   Hamilton County, Ohio, Board of County Commissioners

Location:
   Southwest Ohio

Facilities Facts:
   Over 3,000 properties, 275 buildings, 3.5 million sq. ft., 1,200 work requests/week

ARCHIBUS Applications:
   Space Management; Fleet Management; Emergency Preparedness; Real Property & Lease Management; Building Operations Management; Strategic Master Planning; Furniture & Equipment; TEAMS Green Building and MSDS applications

Reasons for Implementing:
   Need for reliable, centralized space inventory/work order management; expanded emergency preparedness; improved health/safety, environmental sustainability capabilities

Benefits Gained:
   Accurate space and allocation information; consistent method (BOMA) of calculating space allocations; ability to plan/forecast space needs; Web-based access for approved users; administrative/training savings

Business Partners:
   GBBN, ARCHIBUS Solution Center – Environment +Sustainability Services, BRG

Web Site:
   www.hamilton-co.org

made accessible to Emergency Responders.

"With contact information from all of the agencies now consolidated in a single location, it will be easier to locate personnel in the event of an emergency," says Linne. "We'll also use this application as our contact list to notify department heads and elected officials of building closings. We will be able to access this information over the Web in order to make the necessary calls."

More recently, as a potential swine flu epidemic threatened the country, Hamilton County assumed a typically proactive stance as a protector of the public's health. In response to the contingency planning that was required after the 9/11 attack and attendant anthrax scares, the County's General Health District, in its First Responder role, created a response plan, to manage the worst-case scenarios. The planning discipline the County engineered would allow it to deliver needed services and medications, such as the H1N1 vaccine, to 850,000 county residents within 48 hours.

Using a Web-based custom application on an ARCHIBUS platform, the County created the software needed for tracking the movement of full and partial vaccine inventories to and from 32 distribution points, run by trained volunteers from community groups, says Facilities IS Manager, Michelle Ray. By design, the system had to be simple; a goal aided by its use of ARCHIBUS and its Web-based technology. It also needed to be accessible by neighboring counties, and have the capability to support two types of "events", as well as observe federal and county reporting requirements.

Achieving Safety, LEED Goals with TEAMS

Complementing this emergency response capability, were several ARCHIBUS-based health and safety custom applications for tracking hazardous waste and asbestos management. The County also implemented the ARCHIBUS Total Environmental Asset Management System (TEAMS) Environmental Health and Safety application for tracking worker training and certification currency in those areas.

"A broader focus on environmental sustainability in recent years also prompted the County to add the TEAMS Green Building application," reports Ms. Ray. "Green Building will help us achieve LEED certification goals for new construction and renovations. Our intent is to have all such projects meet at least LEED Silver standards on projects of 5,000 sq. ft. or more, or if it affects 80% of a building's total area."

"Green Building will help us document and track progress through LEED or other sustainability and green building certification processes," Ms. Ray notes.

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